

City of Reading City Council
Regular Business Meeting
Monday, April 11, 2011

Vaughn D. Spencer, President of Council, called the meeting to order.

The invocation was given by a representative of Reverend Fred Opalinski from Trinity Lutheran Church.

All present pledged to the flag.

ATTENDANCE

Council President Spencer
Councilor Acosta, District 1
Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz, District 2
Councilor Sterner, District 3
Councilor Marmarou, District 4
Councilor Reed, District 5
Councilor Waltman, District 6
Managing Director C. Geffken
Citizen Service Center Manager C. Weidel
Legal Specialist T. Butler
Public Works Director C. Jones
City Auditor D. Cituk
City Clerk L. Kelleher
Sergeant at Arms Captain R. Schafer

PROCLAMATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

City Council issued the following commendations:

- Council Commendation recognizing Fair Housing Month, accepted by Kimberly Talbot, Executive Director Reading Human Relations Commission

PUBLIC COMMENT

Council President Spencer announced that four (4) citizens were registered to address Council on non-agenda topics. He inquired if any member of Council objected to suspending the rule requiring non-agenda comment at the end of the meeting. As no one objected the rule requiring non-agenda comment at the end of the meeting was suspended. Council President Spencer reminded those registered to speak of the remaining public speaking rules.

Daniel J.C. Neiheiser, of Cotton Street, stated that he received a \$25 Quality of Life ticket for storing a mattress in his backyard two (2) days before the trash set out day. He stating storing the unused mattress in his house would be a fire hazard. He asked that the City employ a common sense approach to the ticketing process.

Ernie Schlegel, of Pear Street, described the ticketing his neighborhood experienced and noted that the ticketing addressed some issues but not all issues. He stated that he supports the concept but urged the City to take a more even approach when issuing Quality of Life tickets.

Miriam Feliciano, of Scott Street, requested an investigation of the Parking Authority due to an improperly issued parking ticket she received via first class mail. She expressed the belief that the process used to give parking tickets is unfair and unjust.

Romaine Schwartz, of Scott Street, noted that her property abuts the block of Sheridan Street that was vacated. She stated that she did not agree to the vacation by signing the required petition. She requested a copy of the drawing proposed for the parcel.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA & MINUTES

Council President Spencer called Council's attention to the minutes for the March 28th regular meeting of Council and the agenda for this meeting, including the legislation listed under the Consent Agenda heading. He announced the need to introduce an ordinance authorizing the salary for the new Fire Chief.

Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Sterner, to approve the minutes from the March 28th Regular meeting of Council and the agenda as amended, including the legislation listed under the Consent Agenda heading. The motion is approved unanimously.

Consent Agenda Legislation

Resolution 52-2011 authorizing the Mayor to execute a FFY2010 (36th CD year - January 1, 2010 - December 31, 2010) and FFY2011 (37th CD year - January1, 2011 - December 31, 2011) action plan amendment to move \$30,000 in CDBG funding from the 2010 Street paving activity to the North 14th Street speed table activity **(CD)**

Resolution 53-2011 authorizing the Mayor of the City of Reading is authorized to file an application for DCED funds in the amount of three hundred thousand dollars (\$300,000.00) for the "Goggle Works Apartments" project at Second & Washington Streets and to execute any and all necessary documents and to carry out all procedures as required by the

Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. In addition, the City of Reading will: (1) assume the provision of the full local share of the project costs; and (2) reimburse the Commonwealth for the DCED's share of any expenditures found by DCED to be ineligible. The City Clerk is directed to execute a certificate attesting to the adoption of this Resolution and to furnish a copy to the DCED (**Law**)

Award of Contract – to Lechmanik, Inc., 414 Birmingham Road, West Chester, PA 19382, at a total submitted bid price of \$199,900.00 for various improvements to the Northmont Playground for the Departments of Public Works and Community Development. Lechmanik, Inc. is the low bidder to meet the specifications (**Purchasing**)

Award of Contract - to Entech Engineering, 4 South Fourth Street, Reading, PA 19602, for a total submitted price of approximately \$98,100 for the WWTP Flow Meter Design Project for the Public Works Department (**Purchasing**)

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Managing Director Geffken read the report distributed to Council at the meeting covering the following:

- Marketing of the \$21.88M GO Notes this week, which retires the bonds issued in 2002
- Issuance of the 2010 Fire Report, noting the Fire Department answered 3,653 fire calls and 4,762 EMS calls
- Announcing that City Hall will be closed on Good Friday; however Management and First Level Supervisors will be on duty

Ms. Weidel distributed a handout to Council pertaining to the Citizen's Service Center. The handout gave an overview of the services provided, staffing, and accomplishments.

Councilor Marmarou suggested that Management staff handle the Customer Service Center, as they will be on duty on Good Friday. He also reminded the Managing Director to change the voicemail message alerting the caller that the Customer Service Center is closed.

Managing Director Geffken explained that management staff in the Customer Service Center will be handling other duties.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz expressed the belief that the Customer Service Center provides a valuable service; however it's still in its growth phase. She encouraged the Customer Service Center and its manager to encourage a strong relationship with the Council Office about issues and complaints.

Councilor Waltman noted the systemic problems resulting in citizen complaints. He expressed belief that some citizens have already given up and do not bother to call in

complaints.

Council President Spencer asked Ms. Weidel how many employees are located in the Customer Service Center. Ms. Weidel stated that the Customer Service Center has thirteen (13) employees. Council President Spencer inquired how many phone calls are fielded by the Customer Service Center during the average week. Managing Director Geffken stated that the Customer Service Center receives 175 to 225 call plus walk-ins. Council President Spencer inquired how many employees are assigned to phone duty. Ms. Weidel stated that four (4) employees are assigned to field phone calls.

Councilor Acosta stated that he gets many complaints regarding citizens calling the Customer Service Center and only getting voicemail. Managing Director Geffken stated that the Customer Service Center fields 175 to 225 calls per day, which includes calls answered and callers that have left voicemail messages.

AUDITOR'S REPORT

City Auditor Cituk read the report distributed to Council at the meeting covering the following:

- Issuance of the DCED 2010 Municipal Audit and Finance reports
- Start of the 2010 external audit
- Real Estate tax collection 1994-2011

Councilor Waltman noted the need to identify the amount of Real Estate tax lost due to exempt non-governmental properties and the amount lost through assessment appeals. Council President Spencer agreed with the need to learn the amount lost through tax assessment appeals.

ORDINANCES FOR FINAL PASSAGE

Bill 17-2011 - amending the City of Reading Codified Ordinances Chapter 1 Administration and Government, §1-186. Fiscal Provisions, Parts 2 and 3 by replacing the terms Finance Director and Finance Department with Director of Administrative Services and Department of Administrative Services and amending language regarding Fund Transfers and Inter-fund Borrowing (**Council Staff & PFM**) *Introduced at the March 28 regular meeting*

Councilor Acosta moved, seconded by Councilor Reed, to enact Bill No. 17-2011.

Council President Spencer explained that this amendment changes the references from Finance Director to Administrative Services Director and incorporates the policies recommended by the Act 47 Coordinator into the existing financial policies listed in the Administrative Code.

Council Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the need for careful monitoring of the compliance

ordered by the ordinance. She suggested that Auditor reports be scheduled.

Council President Spencer explained that the City Auditor is required to issue a quarterly report on the Administration's compliance with the policies.

Bill No. 17-2011 was enacted by the following vote:

Yeas: Acosta, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Sterner, Waltman, Spencer, President – 7

Nays: None – 0

Bill No. 18-2011 - establishing a four-way stop intersection at North 13th Street and Elm Street in the City of Reading, Pennsylvania (**Law/Public Works**) *Introduced at the Jan 10 regular meeting*

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz moved, seconded by Councilor Sterner, to enact Bill No. 18-2011.

Council President Spencer explained that the Councilor received background information about the stop sign from Sergeant Fizz at the Public Safety Committee meeting that occurred on Monday, April 4th.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz stated that the review of the traffic issues at the Citadel created a good overall review of traffic issues at all school buildings.

Councilor Acosta also noted the community request for a stop sign or traffic control device at 5th and Bingaman Streets.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz requested that the request for the traffic device be placed on the Public Works agenda.

Managing Director Geffken stated that a flashing warning light is planned for the 5th and Bingaman Street intersection.

Public Works Director Jones stated that PennDOT recently approved a flashing warning light which is pedestrian activated, at this intersection. He stated that the cost is \$50K and the City needs to find the revenue to install the device. He stated that he is seeking assistance from Representative Caltagirone.

Bill No. 18-2011 was enacted by the following vote:

Yeas: Acosta, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Sterner, Waltman, Spencer,

President – 7

Nays: None – 0

INTRODUCTION OF NEW ORDINANCES

Council President Spencer read the following ordinance into the record:

Ordinance – amend 2011 Full Time Position Ordinance by adding a Planner II in the Community Development Department who will focus on the Ricktown Project **(Mayor)**

Ordinance – amending Ordinance 3-2011 (Investigation of any Unauthorized Use of Sewer Funds) by deleting the word “independent” in Section 1 Paragraph 1 first sentence and Section 1 Paragraph 2 in its entirety **(Law/Council Staff)**

Ordinance – authorizing the Mayor to execute the lease between the City of Reading and the Reading Area Fire Fighters Museum, Inc. for premises located at 501 South 5th Street, Reading, Berks County, PA **(Law/Mayor)**

Ordinance – setting the salary of the Fire Chief.

RESOLUTIONS

Resolution 54–2011 reappointing William Gernert to the Plumbing Board (Admin Oversight)

Resolution 55–2011 appointing Ricardo Nieves to the Environmental Advisory Council (Admin Oversight)

Resolution 56-2011 appointing Timothy Steinrock to the Legislative Aide Committee (Admin Oversight)

Resolution 57–2011 appointing Carl McLaughlin to the Water Authority (Admin Oversight)

Resolution 58-2011 reappointing Frank Gilyard to the Historical Architectural Review Board (Admin Oversight)

Councilor Marmarou moved, seconded by Councilor Acosta, to adopt Resolutions No. 54-2011 through 58-2011.

Councilor Marmarou stated that he is amazed by the caliber of the individuals that are applying for appointment and reappointment.

Councilor Reed also noted the pragmatic experience that Mr. McLaughlin has in the Philadelphia area water system.

Resolutions No. 54-2011 through 58-2011 were adopted by the following vote:

Yeas: Acosta, Goodman-Hinnershitz, Marmarou, Reed, Sterner, Waltman, Spencer, President – 7

Nays: None – 0

COUNCIL COMMENT

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the upcoming event at the Pagoda in celebration of Pagoda's 100 year anniversary under City ownership. She stated that the event is scheduled for April 21st from 3:30pm – 5:30pm at the Pagoda.

Councilor Marmarou inquired if the Administration is working with the County to allow partial real estate tax payment on the City real estate at a minimum. Managing Director Geffken stated that Mr. Nagel and Ms. Weidel are working with the County on that issue.

Councilor Marmarou stated that he received correspondence from a citizen about the placement of the pedestrian standards in the street. The citizen supplied information from PennDot stating that the pedestrian standards are not for 24 hour use and are to be removed from the street daily.

Councilor Goodman-Hinnershitz asked the citizens that spoke pertaining to Quality of Life ticketing to meet with her and the Managing Director after the meeting.

Councilor Sterner noted the upcoming Outlet Neighborhood community group meeting scheduled for April 27th at Saint Marks located at 10th and Windsor Streets.

Councilor Acosta noted the need to consider applying the ticketing program in a fair and systematic method.

Councilor Waltman noted that he did not support the Quality of Life ticketing due to his belief that the program should be part of a comprehensive effort and communications plan. He expressed the belief that areas like parking are enforced too aggressively. He expressed his hope that the ticketing program would not be managed in the same way.

Council President Spencer reminded Council of pending invitations to events.

Council President Spencer advised the citizen expressing concern about the vacation of Sheridan Street to request further information from the Public Works Director. He also suggested that the citizen requesting the investigation of the Parking Authority, attend a Parking Authority meeting and express their concerns with the Parking Authority Board of Directors.

Council President Spencer announced the upcoming Council meeting schedule.

Councilor Acosta moved, seconded by Councilor Reed, to adjourn the regular meeting of Council.

Respectfully submitted by Linda A. Kelleher CMC, City Clerk